

# Marston Green Infant Academy

Elm Farm Avenue, Marston Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B37 7AA

**Inspection dates**

29–30 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils do not make sufficiently strong progress from their starting points, especially in mathematics and writing.
- Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. They consequently set work that is too often not appropriately matched to pupils' abilities.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems using reasoning, or to apply mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently identify common errors in pupils' work and this allows the mistakes to be repeated.
- Not all teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics. As a result, tasks and activities planned for pupils are not sufficiently demanding, especially for the most able pupils.
- While leaders have a realistic and accurate view of the most pressing priorities for the school, success criteria in the improvement plans are not precisely matched to improving outcomes for pupils. This affects leaders' accuracy in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the actions they have taken.
- Not all leaders use assessment information quickly enough to identify whether any groups of pupils are in danger of falling behind in their learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governors have taken strong, appropriate and successful action. They have addressed many of the weaknesses in teaching and leadership that had caused outcomes to decline over a considerable period of time.
- Children make a good start in the early years due to strong leadership and provision that is very well matched to their needs.
- Pupils show great respect and consideration for each other. Behaviour is good and pupils' safety and well-being is supported extremely well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported exceptionally well in school.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that all is good or better, and improve the rates of progress for pupils by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and set work that is accurately matched to their abilities, especially for the most able pupils
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their computational skills and knowledge in problem-solving using reasoning, and increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects
  - ensuring that pupils apply their spelling knowledge in all areas of their written work
  - ensuring that all teachers identify frequent and common errors in pupils' work and insist upon accuracy in spelling and punctuation
  - developing teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the school improvement plan has clearer, well-defined success criteria linked to improving outcomes for pupils
  - ensuring that all leaders make greater use of the assessment information that the school holds on pupils to analyse the impact of teaching on particular groups of pupils
  - developing monitoring and evaluation systems so that they more effectively identify where and how teaching can be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has high expectations for all pupils and has worked tirelessly to improve provision across the school. She recognised that there had been an over-emphasis in recent years on pupils' attainment at the expense of an accurate understanding that many pupils were not making sufficiently strong progress from their starting points in school. Consequently, standards at the school had fallen since the predecessor school's last inspection, at which overall effectiveness had been judged as outstanding.
- The headteacher has established a system of shared leadership at the school, which has supported other leaders in developing their skills in leading improvement within their specific areas of responsibility. All leaders share the headteacher's vision to provide pupils at the school with a broad and balanced curriculum that enables them to succeed both academically and emotionally. This has resulted in a harmonious learning environment in school, where pupils feel safe and supported by adults.
- While leaders have taken strong and decisive action to bring about improvements in teaching, they are not complacent and recognise that teaching across the school is still not consistently good and rates of progress for pupils still need to improve.
- The headteacher has worked closely with other local schools and the local authority to identify good practice and to allow teachers and other staff to observe, work alongside and learn from outstanding practice.
- The curriculum is well planned to allow pupils to make good links between subjects through a series of interesting and engaging topic themes, such as 'World War Two' and 'Space'. Leaders have revised topics to ensure that they appeal and are relevant to all pupils, with a particular focus on making some of the themes more 'boy-friendly'. Pupils' learning is enhanced through trips and visits, including to Tamworth Castle, Twycross Zoo and the local museum.
- Pupils are provided with a good range of extra-curricular activities, including cooking, dance and computer clubs that support them further in their academic and social development.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported extremely well. Pupils learn about other faiths and religions and, as a consequence, they are respectful and tolerant of other peoples' beliefs. For example, all pupils had recently taken part in a faith week. Pupils from the Sikh faith had proudly shared their traditions and beliefs. This helped the other pupils to gain an accurate and compassionate view of why their religion was important to them.
- School leaders ensure that the additional pupil premium funding is used effectively to diminish differences in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. An additional experienced teacher leads small group interventions in reading, writing and mathematics and works alongside the family support worker to liaise with parents and carers. As a result, differences in outcomes for these pupils against other pupils nationally are starting to close.
- Additional sports premium funding is used well to widen the range of physical activities

that pupils can take part in and to support staff confidence and skills in teaching this aspect of the curriculum. External sports coaches lead physical education lessons for pupils and provide lunchtime clubs and activities. During the inspection, pupils were observed joining in enthusiastically and skilfully in a dance lesson led by a specialist coach.

- The leader of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that funding is used to provide these pupils with appropriate support. This includes help from outside agencies, such as speech therapists and behavioural support. She undertakes regular monitoring and has brought about improvements that have helped pupils to access their learning more fully.
- The headteacher has implemented robust systems that ensure that safeguarding is effective. She has developed a school improvement plan that focuses on the most important and pressing priorities for the school. Leaders recognise that the improvement plan can be made more effective by ensuring that success criteria are more sharply focused on specific and measurable outcomes for pupils.
- Where particularly weak teaching has been identified in school, the headteacher has taken strong and appropriate action to address any inadequacies. Systems are now in place to manage teachers' performance and to hold them to account for pupils' learning. Regular pupil performance meetings are held with each teacher and leaders undertake analysis of the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. However, the headteacher recognises that not all leaders are yet sufficiently skilled in accurately monitoring and evaluating the impact that teaching has on pupils' outcomes, or using assessment information to identify underachievement. She has identified that further professional development training needs to be established to ensure that all leaders have the necessary skills and confidence to be fully effective in their roles.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They recognise that there has been a decline in pupils' progress over time and that this should have been identified sooner. However, they have been resolute in addressing areas for improvement and now provide strong challenge and support for school leaders. They ask searching and perceptive questions, and ensure that their monitoring is both regular and rigorous.
- Governance has been strengthened by the appointment of additional governors who use their particular expertise to analyse and evaluate the performance of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the range of external information that is available to them. They use this, and detailed headteacher's reports, to track the progress of groups of pupils across the school. Governors have also changed their committee structure so that there is now a far greater emphasis on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors ensure that the resources available to the school are used effectively to promote, support and improve learning opportunities for pupils. Governors fulfil all statutory requirements, including in relation to safeguarding.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is now a strong and vigilant culture of ensuring that safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff in school. The headteacher made her immediate priority on her appointment to review and restructure safeguarding arrangements so that all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, were protected from harm. As a result, pupil well-being is at the heart of the work that the school does.
- All staff are well trained in safeguarding and receive regular updates on their responsibilities. Systems for recording concerns are understood fully by staff. The appointment of the family support worker has further strengthened safeguarding in school. He uses his expertise to liaise with outside agencies and to constantly review practice to identify any further improvements that can be made. Staff have received training in the 'Prevent' duty and leaders are very aware of any particular local issues that might relate to extremism.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They know about not giving out personal information. Pupils are aware that there is a 'Hector' button on the school computers that they can use if they have any feeling of insecurity when using the internet.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- There is currently too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching in school. While there is some good and effective teaching, this is not consistently the case and, as a result, not all pupils made rapid and sustained progress.
- Teachers do not consistently have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. As a result, they set tasks that are sometimes too easy and sometimes too hard for pupils. For example, evidence in pupils' books showed that some of the most able pupils had quickly mastered work on fractions in mathematics. However, they were then set further tasks at the same levels of difficulty that did not require them to think deeply and extend their learning. Several of the most able pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they often found work in mathematics to be undemanding.
- While teachers ensure that pupils are taught core skills in mathematics, such as addition, subtraction and measurement, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to apply these skills in problem-solving using reasoning. Consequently, pupils do not acquire sufficient depth of understanding and this impacts on their progress.
- Teachers do not consistently identify and correct errors in pupils' work, especially in their written work. As a result, pupils continue to make the same mistakes in spelling and punctuation. For example, errors in spelling months of the year or frequently used words such as 'when' were not identified by some teachers and pupils continued to spell the words incorrectly over a long period of time.
- Teacher subject knowledge is not consistently strong in English and mathematics. Some teachers and teaching assistants do not provide accurate examples of

punctuation, such as question marks, in their feedback to pupils. Information provided to pupils is too often superficial and lacks a depth of understanding of the subject.

- Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to apply their writing skills in other subjects, such as history and religious education. However, sometimes the tasks are not appropriate to the different abilities of all the pupils in the class. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects are not sufficiently well developed.
- The teaching of reading has improved significantly over the past academic year. There is now a whole-school, systematic approach to the teaching of phonics that is understood and applied by teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers lead pupils in regular guided reading sessions that help develop pupils' comprehension skills. Teachers are effective in instilling a love of reading in pupils and encourage them to extend this by regular reading at home.
- A cursive style of handwriting is taught across the school. As a result, the majority of pupils' work is neat and well presented.
- Teachers undertake regular assessments of pupils' work to monitor progress. Opportunities have been extended for teachers to work alongside colleagues, both within school and at other local schools, to check the accuracy of their assessments. There is now an increased emphasis on focusing on pupils' progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are polite, considerate and appreciative of what the school does for them. They show respect towards each other and toward adults. Relationships within the school are positive and supportive.
- There are strong systems in place to support pupils' emotional well-being. The external sports coaches work with identified pupils to promote self-esteem. The family support worker has developed strong links with parents that have helped them and their children through traumatic events.
- Pupils are provided with good opportunities to take on responsibility, including as playground buddies and library monitors. Pupils value their roles as representatives on the school council and make good links with how democratic processes work. This helps them to develop a good understanding of fundamental British values, such as tolerance and the rule of law.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is. They know that unkind words can be upsetting for other people and are clear that they are responsible for their own actions. Pupils say that there is virtually no bullying and are confident that there is always an adult who will listen to and act upon any concerns.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection were confident that their children were safe in school. Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of how they can keep themselves safe, including through first aid sessions provided by the

ambulance service.

- The well-run before- and after-school club provides pupils with a positive start and end to the school day. Staff are suitably trained and organise interesting activities that are appreciated by the pupils. Pupil premium funding is used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to places within this provision.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well-behaved at breaktime and lunchtime. The dining hall provides pupils with a calm environment to enjoy their meal. Pupils make good use of the range of equipment available to them on the playgrounds. They relate well to each other and to the adults who supervise and interact with them.
- Behaviour in classrooms is good. Pupils generally listen attentively to each other and the teacher. Occasionally, when teaching is less engaging, some pupils' attention wanders. However, they do not disrupt other pupils' learning.
- Pupils display good manners. They say 'thank you' and 'please' and walk sensibly inside the building.
- Attendance is above the national average. There are very good systems in place to promote good attendance, with rewards and certificates. Where attendance starts to dip, school staff are quick to contact parents and alert them of the need for regular attendance for their children and its impact on pupils' learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils do not make consistently strong progress from their starting points in school.
- In 2016, the proportion of average-ability pupils making expected progress by the end of Year 2 was below that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils had also made below-average progress in writing. Evidence gathered during the inspection, including from the school's own assessment information, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and observations in lessons, indicates that progress is improving but there is still too much variance between classes.
- Pupils' attainment has generally been at least in line with national figures over the past three years since the school opened as an academy. However, this has not indicated good progress for a number of pupils from their starting points. Outcomes have been lowest in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils have made less progress than others nationally in recent years. Due to teaching and provision that is now much more closely matched to these pupils' individual needs, they are starting to make better progress and differences are diminishing.
- The proportion of the most able pupils who were working at greater depth was above the national level in 2016. However, like other pupils in school, their progress had not been strong enough. The most able pupils in school are still making inconsistent progress.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now achieving better. Their needs are carefully identified and support is provided as appropriate. However, as with other pupils in school, there is some inconsistency where their learning needs are not met. The special educational needs coordinator has a clear awareness of this and is working alongside teachers to ensure that all of these pupils can make good progress.
- Attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check had fallen over a two-year period and was slightly below the national level in 2016. Due to the far more effective teaching of early reading that is now established in school, pupils' skills have improved. Provisional school assessment information and evidence gathered during the inspection indicate that attainment has risen this year.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The majority of children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical, with a small minority below. As a result of good teaching and provision that is well matched to the children's needs, they make good progress. By the time children leave the Reception classes they are well prepared for the move to Year 1.
- In 2016, the proportion of children who had reached a good level of development was slightly above the national average. Children thrive both academically and socially and make good progress across all areas of learning. Staff ensure that there is a good balance of adult-led input and opportunities for children to initiate their own, independent learning.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The leader has a clear understanding of the specific needs of young children and undertakes regular monitoring to evaluate the quality of teaching and its impact on children's learning. She has worked alongside leaders in other early years settings to identify ways that provision can be improved. The school has commissioned support and advice from the local authority when needed. The leader and the headteacher are ambitious to continue to develop the already good provision and as such, ensure that training for all staff is matched well to their individual requirements.
- Both the indoor and outdoor classrooms in Nursery and Reception are attractive and well-resourced areas that stimulate children's interest and curiosity. During the inspection, a group of children in one of the Reception classes was observed designing their own map of London, linked to their current topic on the capital city. They applied their phonics knowledge well to write labels and discussed in depth which particular features, such as Big Ben and the Tower of London, they wished to include. Adults asked well-chosen questions that allowed the children to extend their spoken language.
- Children are well behaved and demonstrate good social skills. They understand the need to take turns and to listen when other people are speaking. They take responsibility for getting their own snacks and drinks, such as fruit and milk, and know that these contribute to a healthy lifestyle.
- All welfare standards are fully met. All staff have the appropriate paediatric first aid training and this is further evidence of the emphasis on ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective.

- Links with parents are good. Parents are involved in initial assessments when children start at school. Leaders also ensure that there is good liaison with other nurseries and early years providers to make sure that they have accurate information on children's skills and knowledge when they start at Marston Green Infant Academy.
- Additional funding is used well to support disadvantaged children in the early years. Interventions are put in place as soon as possible to develop self-esteem, confidence, and listening and attention skills. This ensures that these children are in as strong a position as possible to make good progress.
- Teachers and other staff undertake regular assessments to measure children's progress and to then plan activities that take learning forward. The leader is aware and has clear plans to further refine assessment practice so that it provides a greater depth of understanding of children's starting points and potential.

## School details

Unique reference number	140733
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10032623

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	Three to seven
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Guthrie
Headteacher	Beverley Elliott
Telephone number	0121 779 5667
Website	<a href="http://www.marstongreeninfantschool.com">www.marstongreeninfantschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@marstongreen-inf.solihull.sch.uk">office@marstongreen-inf.solihull.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the current year's sports funding, the school's strategy for the pupil premium for the current academic year and the accessibility plan for disabled pupils.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about equality objectives.
- Marston Green Infant Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club for its pupils.

- The school opened as a stand-alone academy on 1 April 2014. When its predecessor school, Marston Green Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, in March 2009, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The headteacher took up her post in April 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 17 lessons or parts of lessons.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with a group of pupils, including members of the school council. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and breaktimes, as well as in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the two assistant headteachers, the early years leader and a subject leader. The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also talked to parents at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Adam Hewett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Tibbits	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector
Martina Abbott	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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